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June 16, 1959

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY

If and after the conference adjourns or recesses, I recommend that, after securing the agreement of Couve and Selwyn, you alone (possibly by asking him to lunch) see Gromyko privately for the purpose of informing him as follows:

(1) We realize that our opposing positions on the reunification of Germany are at present irreconcilable. We attach the greatest importance to the achievement of a reunified Germany by peaceful negotiation. Its character should be such as not to constitute a military threat to any of its neighbors. Its status as well as its unity must rest on the freely given consent of all Germans. This objective is, in our view, as much in the Soviets' interest as it is in ours. This is a matter of such importance that we should continue in communication with each other through future conferences or through normal diplomatic channels. Even though we may for the moment agree to disagree, it is certainly a subject of such importance that each of us should feel free to raise the matter at any time with the other.

(2) In light of this situation it is clearly in the interest of both of us to avoid any increase in tensions. We do not share the Soviet view that the situation of West Berlin is dangerous or that incidents there might develop and get out of hand. We for our part will undertake to exercise restraint. We count on the Soviets doing the same in their interest as well as ours.

(3) We have reached agreement during this conference on the fact that from a military point of view Western garrisons in West Berlin pose no military threat to the DDR or to the Soviet Union. It is our intention not to increase the numbers or armaments of these garrisons.

(4) ~~SECRET~~

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<sup>must</sup>  
(4) The Soviets ~~must~~ understand that our determination is firm to maintain our forces and our presence in West Berlin and to resist any action by the DDR or by the Soviets to hinder free access to and from Berlin by land, air and water for military and civilian traffic. The importance we attach to our public pledge to West Berlin is such that we are prepared to accept the most serious risks in this connection.

(5) One small point on which we wish to make our position clear. This is that with the change in character of standard air transport equipment we will be using C-130s on the run into West Berlin. ~~They~~ must operate for the sake of efficiency in the higher altitudes. Our purpose is not provocative and we would take a serious view of any interference with these flights such as have characterized them in the past.

(6) We consider it important to keep in continuing touch for the purpose of exchanging views with the Soviet Union. We are prepared to resume or initiate meetings for this purpose at the level of Foreign Ministers or their deputies as we may mutually agree. Meanwhile and in any event the normal lines of diplomatic communication remain open. We hope and assume the Soviets will avail themselves of these channels as we ourselves intend to do.

✓  
Livingston T. Merchant

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6/16/59

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Authority

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By

BG NARA Date 10/6/86